

# Caring For A Flu Patient At Home

## How do I know if I have the flu?

If you have the flu, you will have a fever and some or all of these symptoms:

- Body aches
- Muscle pain
- Fever and chills
- Headache
- Dry Cough
- Runny or stuffy nose

## **Wash Your Hands Properly!**

### Step One:



Wet hands with warm, running water.

### Step Two:



Apply soap & scrub hands for at least 20 seconds, covering all surfaces and scrub nails. Rinse.

### Step Three:



Dry hands with a paper towel. Use the paper towel to turn off the water.

Message Brought To You By:



[www.bibbphysicians.org](http://www.bibbphysicians.org)



Public Health for Middle Georgia  
[www.northcentralhealthdistrict.com](http://www.northcentralhealthdistrict.com)

## Can I take care of myself or my loved ones at home?

Proper care of individuals with the flu should start at home. You should call your health care professional and/or 911 if symptoms are severe. When caring for normal flu symptoms at home, follow the following suggestions:

### **REDUCE FEVER**

- Drink plenty of fluids
- Take fever-reducing medicines, such as acetaminophen, aspirin or ibuprofen, following the instructions on the label. Make sure that you do not give aspirin to anyone under the age of 20.
- Keep a temperature log, including the temperature and the time.
- Take a sponge bath with lukewarm water.



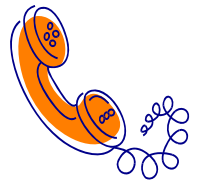
### **PREVENT DEHYDRATION**

- Drink plenty of water and only eat foods that are easily digested, such as soup and broth
- Drink fluids that contain electrolytes. (See back for recipe)
- If drinking makes nausea symptoms worse, drink one sip at a time until the symptoms are gone.



### **CLOSELY MONITOR SYMPTOMS**

- Keep a log that records the date, time, temperature, symptoms, the names of medicines given and the amount given.
- Call your physician if you have any of these symptoms:
  - ⇒ High Fever
    - Children and adults: Greater than 105
    - Babies 3 - 24 months: Greater than 103
    - Babies under 3 months: Greater than 100.4
  - ⇒ Shaking Chills
  - ⇒ Coughing that produces thick dark-colored or bloody mucus
  - ⇒ Dehydration, noted by dry mouth or excessive thirst
  - ⇒ Extreme pain in your ear
  - ⇒ Worsening of a pre-existing medical condition (e.g., diabetes, heart or lung disease)
- If you cannot reach your physician, call 9-1-1 for any of the symptoms below:
  - ⇒ Irritability and/or confusion
  - ⇒ Difficulty breathing or chest pains
  - ⇒ Blue skin
  - ⇒ Stiff neck
  - ⇒ Inability to move arm or neck
  - ⇒ First-time seizures



## How can I prevent the spread of the flu?



When you cough or sneeze, tiny droplets that contain the virus go from your mouth and nose to surfaces that other people touch. This spreads the flu virus very quickly.

### Follow these steps to reduce the spread of the flu virus:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer. See the proper hand washing steps on the front of this handout.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve.
- Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose, and mouth to limit the amount of germs that enter your body.
- Limit your contact with crowds of people who could possibly be sick. If you must be around others, consider wearing a mask. This may protect you.
- Avoid close, personal contact (hugging, kissing, shaking hands, etc.)
- If you are sick, stay home from work or school.
- If someone in your household is sick:
  - ⇒ Wear disposable gloves when handling body fluids.
  - ⇒ Keep everyone's personal items separate (sheets, blankets, eating utensils, pens, etc.)
  - ⇒ Use very hot water to wash clothes and dishes.
  - ⇒ Wash your hands after handling dirty laundry.
  - ⇒ The sick person should stay in one room of the house.
  - ⇒ One person should be the caregiver. Consider wearing a mask.
  - ⇒ Disinfect any surface that is commonly touched, such as door-knobs, switches, toys, telephones, remote controls, etc.
  - ⇒ An effective disinfectant is 1 gallon water mixed with 1/4 cup bleach. After you are done, do not save the mixture for future use.
- Take the proper steps to reduce dehydration. If someone has diarrhea or is vomiting, give fluids that contain electrolytes. You can purchase them at a grocery store or pharmacy or you can follow the recipe below:
  - ⇒ 1 quart water
  - ⇒ 1/2 tsp. baking soda
  - ⇒ 1/2 tsp. table salt
  - ⇒ 3 to 4 tbsp. sugar
  - ⇒ 1/4 tsp. salt substitute (eg. Salt Sense®, Lite Salt®)
  - ⇒ Mix well. Flavor with lemon juice or sugar-free Kool-Aid®

2/28/2008

## How can I prepare for a flu pandemic?

- Have your family disaster kit handy. Add items that would help you care for someone with the flu, such as:
  - ⇒ Thermometer
  - ⇒ Disposable gloves
  - ⇒ Acetaminophen (eg. Tylenol®)
  - ⇒ Ibuprofen (eg. Motrin®, Advil®)
  - ⇒ Bleach
  - ⇒ Soap
  - ⇒ Tissues
  - ⇒ Paper Towels
  - ⇒ Hand Sanitizer
  - ⇒ Surgical masks for each person in your household
  - ⇒ Sugar, baking soda, salt, salt substitute
  - ⇒ This handout
- Plan how you will care for yourself and your loved ones if you become sick.
- Plan how you will take care of a sick loved one.
- If schools and daycares have to close, who will take care of your child?

## Emergency Contacts

Use this space to write important telephone numbers (doctor's office, family members, etc.)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**If you have an emergency,  
call 9-1-1**